



The bed and the reading table of the two children mysteriously killed in Banasree of Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# 2 war crimes suspects held in Moulvibazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested two war crimes accused from Moulvibazar yesterday, hours after the International Crimes Tribunal-1 issued arrest warrants for three persons, who were allegedly involved in crimes committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

The arrestees are Abdul Aziz alias Habul, 63, of Pakhiala village under Barlekha upazila, and Abdul Mannan, 64, of Taradaram village of the same upazila.

After receiving the arrest warrants, police held the two around 3:45pm from two separate places in Barlekha, Mohammad Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Barlekha Police Station, told The Daily Star over the phone.

"We are trying to arrest the other accused," he added.

Earlier in the day, the two-member tribunal led by Justice Md Shahinur Islam with member Justice Md Shohrwardi issued the arrest warrants following a prosecution petition. Tribunal's chairman Justice Anwarul Haque was on leave.

Prosecutor Sabina Yasmin Munni told the tribunal that the investigation officer of the case started a probe into the case on October 16, 2014, and already found "evidence" over their involvement in crimes committed during the Liberation War.

She said the accused are influential persons in their localities and they are "intimidating" the prosecution's probable witnesses. Besides, the accused may go into hiding.

So, the accused need to be arrested and kept in jail for "proper and effective investigation," she added.

Shahjahan Kabir, the investigation officer of the case, said the accused were involved with Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of the Pakistan army. He has already got evidence over their involvement in at least two incidents of crimes involving rape, arson, and torture in Barlekha in 1971.

Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday fixed March 6 to record the testimony of a defence witness in a case filed against five alleged war criminals from Kishoreganj.

Earlier, the tribunal completed recording of the cross-examination of Ataur Rahman, the investigation officer and also the last prosecution witness in the case.

The accused in the case are Gazi Abdul Mannan, 88, the alleged commander of Karimganj Razakar camp, Nasiruddin Ahmed, 62, and his brother Shamsuddin Ahmed, 60, Hafiz Uddin, 66, and Azharul Islam, 60, alleged Razakar members. They all are from Kishoreganj's Karimganj upazila.

Of the five, who are facing seven charges, only Shamsuddin is now in prison, while the rest are on the run.

## Some politicians helped '1/11 masterminds'

Says Quader; Goyeshwar alleges Hasina is PM thanks to '1/11 plot'

STAR REPORT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said some politicians helped the masterminds of the 1/11 changeover from behind the scenes to depoliticise the country and they should admit their mistake and repent.

"If they do so, we will be able to see many inconvenient truths. One day it will be revealed who were the characters and masterminds... who were on the stage and who were behind the scenes of 1/11," he said addressing a discussion in the city.

At another programme in the capital, BNP senior leader Goyeshwar Chandra Roy said Sheikh Hasina became the prime minister as a result of the 1/11 conspiracy and her party benefited the most from it, reports UNB.

"You're [Hasina] enjoying the results of the 1/11 conspiracy and vote rigging. You couldn't have been the prime minister had the 1/11 conspiracy not happened," he said.

At the National Museum Auditorium, addressing a discussion on political philosophy of Bangabandhu, Quader said, "The main target of 1/11 was depoliticisation. At that time, many senior leaders held meetings with junior- and mid-level military intelligence officials for hours and assisted them."

If politics is on the right track and political leaders remain honest, the conspiracies of the evil forces would never be successful, said the presidium member of the ruling Awami League.

The minister said there was a debate and discussion on the issue in 2009. He said he could not say why and on whose directives the discussion had stopped at that time when many raised the demand for trial of the 1/11 masterminds.

The truth would come out one day, he added.

Meanwhile, speaking at a protest programme arranged by Greater Noakhali Jatiyatabadi Student Forum at the Jatiya Press Club demanding the release of BNP Student Affairs Secretary Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee, Goyeshwar said Hasina herself had claimed that the 1/11 administration was the outcome of her party's movement, UNB reports.

He said, "If the 1/11 regime is the result of your movement, you should award Prothom Alo's Matiar Rahman and The Daily Star's Mahfuz Anam and other journalists who played their parts...."

Goyeshwar, a BNP standing committee member, warned that the plot of 1/11 was still on with a "different strategy". "This conspiracy can only be thwarted by restoring democracy in the country."

Referring to the prime minister's recent remarks that the two editors of the country's leading dailies were behind the "minus-two formula", the BNP leader suggested that Hasina first finds the "Awami League leaders who developed and promoted the formula".

## Arrestees name 50 card 'fraudsters'

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subsequently led to the unearthing of the gang.

Asked whether Thomas told the police how much money his gang had stolen, Monirul said Thomas did not know the exact amount. The transactions were from Tk 5 lakh to Tk 20 lakh, he said.

Earlier, Monirul had said Thomas and his accomplices spent the last one year to find corrupt bank officials in the card divisions of banks, individuals, and businesses, like a hotel or travel agents, that were using point of sale machines.

They made transactions of Tk 5-7 lakh or more at a time, but those had nothing

to do with the businesses. The authorities of the banks did not have any knowledge of those transactions.

Compared to the money embezzled from the banks through POS machines, the amount stolen from the ATM booths seems rather small, said Monirul.

"Before Piotr came to Bangladesh,

other members of the syndicate were here and stole cash from banks," he said.

The interrogation of Thomas also revealed that the syndicate used a very advanced and sophisticated technology to collect information from the Internet.

Meanwhile, German authorities confirmed police that Thomas was

indeed a German citizen of Polish descent, ending the confusion over his citizenship.

The police found that his polish passport bearing the name Piotr Szczepan Mazurek was fake.

A Dhaka court on Monday granted a five-day fresh remand for the four after the end of their six days' in remand.

## Tigers take on Pakistan with eye on final

FROM PAGE 1

Mustafizur Rahman, but their batting will be bolstered with the return of Tamim Iqbal.

The two teams will also be looking to heal recent wounds that they have inflicted on each other. Some of Bangladesh's most heart-wrenching moments in the Asia Cup have come against Pakistan. It was against Pakistan that the Tigers lost the Asia Cup final in 2012 by just two runs, a result that left the players in tears and the nation distraught at having missed their first major silverware so narrowly.

In the next edition in 2014 a score of 326 raised hopes of a victory against Pakistan for the first time since the famous 1999 World Cup upset, but after the match seemed to be in Bangladesh's pocket, Shahid Afridi put paid to those hopes in a whirlwind of sixes to

strengthen their Asia Cup record against Bangladesh to a perfect 12-0.

This does not mean Pakistan are sitting especially pretty ahead of today's crucial encounter. While Bangladesh's wounds go back to the last edition, painful memories for Pakistan -- who were subjected to a 3-0 ODI series loss and a 1-0 T20I loss at the hands of Bangladesh last year -- are more recent.

A 12-0 Asia Cup record should not bother a Bangladesh team who have made it a habit of correcting past wrongs as they did by winning their first T20I against Sri Lanka on Sunday. What will be a bigger issue however is the absence of Mustafizur, who has been ruled out of the ongoing tournament with a side strain. It will disrupt a pace strategy that has been the cornerstone of Bangladesh's rousing successes in 2015. The young left-arm's place will likely be taken by Nasir Hossain or left-arm spin-

ner Arafat Sunny. Left-arm pacer Abu Hider is also a possibility.

"Depends on the condition of the pitch and the opposition," said Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha during a pre-match press briefing in Mirpur yesterday when asked who is more likely to play.

Both sides enter this contest with misfiring batting line-ups. The opening combination for Bangladesh has been a concern, and they had to rely on a single-handed display by Sabbir Rahman -- 80 out of a team total of 147 -- to beat Sri Lanka. Pakistan were dismissed for just 83 by India and were in trouble at 17 for three against the UAE.

The good news for Bangladesh is that the opening problem will likely be solved by Tamim's return. In the three matches, Mohammad Mithun and Soumya Sarkar have gotten out cheaply on two occa-

sions. Tamim, who had displayed fine form in the recently-concluded Pakistan Super League, is likely to take Mithun's spot at the top.

According to Pakistan coach Waqar Younis, they will enter the match as favourites despite their series losses last year. A reason for that confidence may be their pace attack -- spearheaded by the hugely talented Mohammad Amir -- that has been very threatening on pitches featuring more grass than traditionally seen in Mirpur.

Even without Mustafizur, a bowling line-up including Taskin Ahmed, Al-Amin Hossain, Mashrafe and Shakib Al Hasan is a strong one for Bangladesh. With two strong attacks likely to cancel each other out, what may well decide the contest today is which batting side handles the conditions and the pressures better.

## Star editor

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Defence counsels yesterday argued there was no defamatory element in the complaint. The complainant's lawyer opposed it.

After a hearing, Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Shafiul Alam granted the editor bail upon the signing of a bond of Tk 1,000 with two guarantors.

Following the filing of the case in Rangpur on February 15, the court summoned Anam to appear before it on March 1.

The cases, filed between February 9 and February 22 in 53 districts, include 17 pleas for bringing seditious charges. A total of Tk 1,32,811 crore has been sought as compensation.

Local and international journalists and their unions have condemned this barrage of cases against the Star editor.

## Imams' role vital, but left untapped

FROM PAGE 1

have been left out of the training, but that was not intentional. He, however, acknowledges that such imams should be included in the programme on a priority basis.

**'TEACHING NOT EFFECTIVE'**  
Imams aged between 20 and 50 with "good health and attitude" and having Dakhil (equivalent to SSC) degree are selected by the Islamic Foundation upon a circular. The training takes place at seven divisional offices of the Foundation. Each trainee gets Tk 300 in daily allowance and Tk 800 in transportation cost.

Analysis of the training module shows imams are given lessons on Islamic studies, primary healthcare and family welfare, pre-primary, primary and mass education, agriculture and forestation, livestock and fisheries, science and ICT, environment and social development, an introduction to Bangladesh and the world, and activities of the Islamic Foundation.

There are also lessons on checking corruption, women and children repression and trafficking, dowry and child marriage, and awareness building against drug peddling, HIV/AIDS and terrorism. In addition, immunisation, disaster management, human development, various phases of Islam in Bangladesh and a brief history of the Liberation War are touched upon.

Instructors and teachers for the training programme are mostly drawn from the Islamic Foundation. Police and army officers, officials from home and religious affairs ministries, teachers of Islamic studies, health officers and agriculturalists give lessons as guest teachers.

Established on March 22, 1975, the Foundation has been training imams since 1979. The issue of militancy was included in the training in 2009.

criminology at Dhaka University, believes that the government is missing out a big opportunity by not using imams in the fight against militancy.

"Such a programme could have been the perfect platform for countering extremism since imams interact with a cross-section of people regularly. But the method of teaching is not effective," he told The Daily Star.

To him, militancy is such a critical issue that it cannot be eliminated from people's mind just by casually mentioning it. "You have to strike them with logics and references. A trained imam can be a good weapon here. But at the same time, the role of a specialist or even a psychologist is becoming vital in de-motivating radicals," he observed.

**'NO NEED'**  
But the Islamic Foundation DG feels there is no need for making militancy a separate subject and holding extensive discussions on it.

"Militancy is being discussed with other subjects and with importance. We alert imams about the evil force and ask them to talk against it at various forums, including in Juma sermons," he said.

However, one official of the Foundation who gives classes, said, "You can't motivate anyone to preach against militancy with only a few classes. A specialised programme, it may be for five days, should be introduced to motivate them."

He requested not to be named, as he did not want to differ with his boss publicly.

KEY FACTS	
Number of mosques	3 lakh
Number of imams	5 lakh
Imams trained (1979-Jan 2016)	84,485
Foundation course	45 days
Total subjects	9
Total classes	185
Militancy not a separate subject	
No expert teachers on the course	
Prescribed Juma sermon not followed	
Not comfortable using the word militancy	

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

over the years told this paper that the issue of militancy was already out of their mind. In contrast, they could very well remember what they learned on agro production, fishery, livestock, poultry and plantation.

After the training, some of them work for checking repression of woman and children and their trafficking, drug peddling, child marriage, dowry and corruption. But only a small number of them get involved in the campaign against terrorism and militancy. Only rarely, they give sermons against it in Juma prayers and other social gatherings.

**'HARDLY REMEMBER ANYTHING'**  
Muhammad Habibur Rahman, imam of Farajibari Jame Mosque in Jhalakathi, who won the Best (khamari) Farmer Award in 2013, could remember most of the issues he had learnt during the course but nothing about militancy.

Asked why, he said, "Militancy was

discussed but not as importantly as other issues. We were asked to give sermons but I could not do it."

Another imam, Md Ismail Hossain, who too got the Best Farmer Award, can recall hardly anything about militancy. "It came up in the middle of discussions on other issues."

On Friday, The Daily Star correspondents in Rajshahi, Pabna and Chittagong, who attended the Juma prayers at the local mosques, said there was nothing against militancy in the sermons. The imams in those mosques were trained by the Foundation.

In contrast, Md Bashir Uddin, imam of Fakirpara Jame Mosque in Chapainawabganj, spoke against extremism in his sermon. Interestingly, he did not take the Islamic Foundation training.

Islamic Foundation sources said there are imams who usually speak against militancy, but training has nothing to do with their anti-militancy sermons.

Islamic Foundation's own evaluation reveals that most imams are not playing an active role in combating religious fundamentalism.

Every year, the Foundation identifies three best imams from across the country, 18 from the eight divisions, and 64 from as many districts, evaluating their performance and teachings.

Of the three best imams in 2012-13, one had played some anti-militancy role. The number was seven out of the 18 at division level and 17 out of the 64 at district level. A similar picture emerged the following year, according to Foundation sources.

Md Anisur Rahman of Uttar Sabujbagh Jame Mosque in Patuakhali is one of the few imams taking on extremism.

"In Juma prayers, I explain with references from the Holy Quran and the Hadith that those who kill or create chaos in the society in the

name of Islam have no relations with Islam. I tell them Islam does not support anything like this," he told The Daily Star.

He regularly talks about it at meetings and seminars, explaining what Islam actually stands for, as opposed to the twisted version of it.

### LITTLE MONITORING

There is little monitoring to see if imams preach against militancy. All that the Islamic Foundation does is organise a five-day "refresher" programme for the trained imams where the same issues are discussed again.

Over the years, 27,794 imams got such training.

For its part, the government organises an all-imam conference every year. The prime minister attends the programme as the chief guest, hands over awards to the best imams and asks them to speak out against militancy.

As militancy has become a big headache for the government with targeted attacks and killings of writers, publishers, bloggers and minorities, the home minister and the inspector general of police recently took to meeting imams and other religious scholars and leaders. Such meetings are also being organised in some districts.

These meetings are aimed at involving imams in the efforts to spread the counter-militancy message and eradicate wrong perceptions about Islam.

Such efforts, however, bring little success, as there is no well-thought-out campaign against fundamentalism with religious leaders playing a robust role. Moreover, there are no deradicalisation programmes centring on various madrasas, particularly the Qawmi madrasas.

As a result, in the fight against extremism the government has to depend almost solely on law enforcers, who can only capture, not cure.